

Supporting Family Systems: *Families Are Systems*

TERESA'S FAMILY

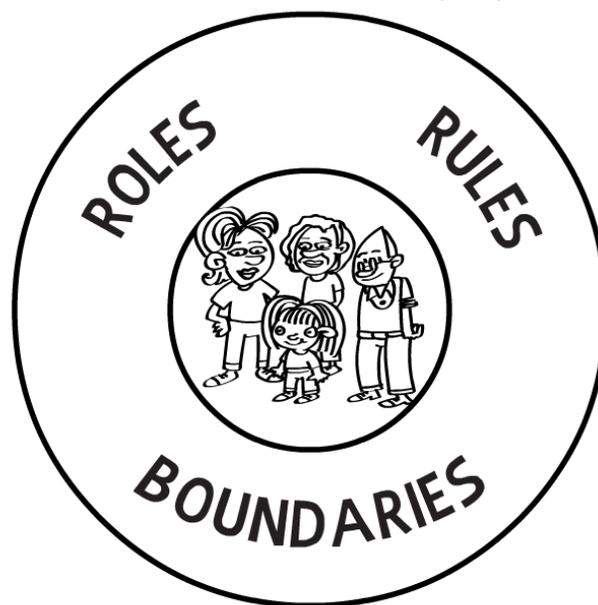
Janice, a single mother, enrolled her daughter, Teresa, in a center-based program. Teresa's teacher, Gwen, asks Janice if she can visit the family in their home. Janice is reluctant, as her family generally doesn't have visitors, but eventually agrees.

During the visit, Gwen learns that Janice's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Karp, also live in the home. Mrs. Karp is present during the home visit and sits quietly, holding Teresa on her lap.

A week later, Janice tells Gwen that she doesn't want Teresa "roughhousing" with boys and playing on climbing structures. Janice says she personally doesn't have a problem with these activities, but her mother doesn't want Teresa to "play like boys."

- How are members of this family interconnected? How do they influence one another?
- What do we know or not know about their family roles?
- Can you identify any rules in this family? Are they the same or different from school rules?
- What do we know about this family's boundaries?

Below the Surface Family Dynamics



Partner Activity

Family Open House: Yvonne, the lead teacher in the preschool room, knows little about Ray and Dina, the parents of one of her students. She would like to know them better. Both parents are polite and quiet; they rarely initiate conversations with the preschool staff or other families. They attended the Family Open House event, but arrived after the potluck. When Yvonne asked them about it, they said they preferred to eat at home with their family.

- Identify a possible "below the surface" dynamic or pattern that may be present in Ray and Dina's family.
- What are some dynamics or patterns for Yvonne to consider about this family?